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THE DEMOCRATIC ELEMENT IN CALVIN'S THOUGHT

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Calvin's political interests had a beginning in his humanistic studies, before his conversion, or commitment to Protestantism. *His Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia* appeared April 4, 1532. The date of his conversion is much disputed, but there is fairly good evidence for placing it almost exactly two years later, about the time of his visit to Lefèvre in April, 1534. His own statements here must be given more weight than those made by Beza after Calvin's death. If, as is probable, he was inwardly half convinced of the Protestant position in 1532, he was, nonetheless, still clinging tenaciously—in his own words "obstinately devoted (adonné)"—to the papacy and had apparently not definitely discarded any of his traditional assumptions with respect to religion. When the *Commentary* appeared he had very recently completed his law studies. The period of these studies had been animated by his participation in a controversy between the partisans of his two law masters, the eminent French jurist Pierre de l'Étoile of Orleans and the Italian humanist and legal scholar Andrea Alciati who was lecturing at Bourges. His support of the former against the latter seems to have had no definable bearing upon the development of his political ideas. He may have been moved by French patriotism, or attracted by Étoile's conservative spirit, and he seems to have formed a low estimate of Alciati on personal grounds.¹ The *Commentary* may be compared, though to its disadvantage, with the author's later commentaries on Scripture. It follows the same general method. But while it offers evidence of his careful reading of numerous classical authors, it has only three incidental references to the Bible.

Calvin's selection of Seneca's plea for "clemency" as the subject of his study is noteworthy. There is no proof that he intended the book specifically as an admonition to Francis I to cease persecution of Protestants, but it must be thought of in

¹ Cf. Quirinus Breen, *John Calvin: a Study in French Humanism* (Grand Rapids, 1931), 40-55.

the context of the irresponsible absolutism of the King. In it Calvin assails with great freedom the pride and inhumanity of kings. But the *Commentary* is to be associated rather with the "Mirror of Princes" literature of the late Middle Ages, of which the *Christian Prince* of Erasmus is the flower, than with any demands for constitutional government. Calvin instructs the prince; he does not arouse the people. He has no specific proposals for the limitation of royal power, and he takes a somewhat ambiguous position on the relation of the king to the law. The law is said to be "above the prince," but the idea that princes are *legibus solutus*, not bound by the laws, also finds expression; they ought, nevertheless, to live according to the laws. This is substantially the view of the admired French humanist, William Budé, in his *Institution du Prince*, a book written about 1516 and published only in 1547. Calvin may have known this work in manuscript, since he was on familiar terms with members of Budé's family.²

The *De Clementia* was written by Seneca for Nero's benefit, to urge a policy of "clemency." This term the Stoic author interprets as "*temperantia animae*," or "*lenitas superioris adversus inferiorem*" in determining penalties. Calvin takes up in detail many of Seneca's phrases, expounding and usually amplifying his thought. He notes, however, some points of disapproval. Seneca will not admit *misericordia* (compassion or mercy) as a part of clemency, but calls it a *vitium animi*. Calvin says it is a virtue, ascribes Seneca's attitude to the Stoic rejection of emotion, to him unacceptable, and supports his own position, notably, not from Scripture, but from Cicero and Aristotle, and from the fact that there was an altar to "Misericordia" in Athens.³ There is no mention of Machiavelli here or elsewhere in Calvin's writings; but Quirinus Breen is justified in suggest-

2 In an extended study of Budé's treatise, M. Triwunatz holds that it was written before that of Erasmus appeared. According to Budé, the king has no right to do what is dishonorable, or to abrogate a law that expresses the divine justice. Even if kings were free from all obligations, they ought, in their own interests, to subject themselves to the laws of their states. *Guillaume Budé's De l'institution du prince* (Erlangen and Leipzig, 1903), 44; 54ff. Cf. L. Delaruelle, *Guillaume Budé, les origines, les debuts, les idées maitresses* (Paris, 1907); Calvin, *Opera*, V, 23, 67. On Budé see also Breen, *John Calvin*, 113ff., and J. T. McNeill, *Christian Hope for World Society* (Chicago, 1937), 90ff. On the relation of the law and the prince, Erasmus, in *Institutio principis Christiani* (1516), ch. vi, has a statement more in accord with Calvin's later teaching: "A state is happy when all the citizens obey the prince, the prince obeys the laws, and the laws are just and honorable and conducive to the public welfare."

3 Calvin, *Opera*, V, 153-54.

ing that Machiavelli's doctrine of relentless power may have been in his thought here, when he points to the responsibility of kings to God and assails tyranny.⁴ It is easy to find antecedents to the main ideas of the *Commentary* in scholastic and civilian teaching. For young Calvin the tyrant is one "who governs against the will of his subjects or exercises power immoderately."⁵ Thus the test of tyranny is not the usurpation of power, but the will of the governed. These words offer a close parallel to a sentence of Alciati, whose classes Calvin had recently attended: "He is a just prince who reigns with the consent of his people, and he is a tyrant who reigns over unwilling subjects."⁶

In his later writings Calvin's political ideas are set in the context of his theology, which has its center in the doctrine of the sovereignty and sublime majesty of God. It is well known that he habitually rings the changes on this theme. He also likes to bring into relief what he calls the *virtutes* or perfections of God, such as "clemency, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, and truth," and stresses especially three of these: i, mercy (*miseriordia*), in which alone consists all our salvation;⁷ ii, judgment (*iudicium*), which God exercises upon the wicked; and iii, righteousness (*iustitia*), by which he preserves the faithful. This selection of the divine attributes is referred to Jeremiah 9:24: "I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth."⁸ In political and social matters, then, he would insist upon the principle of the sovereignty of this God of mercy, judgment, and justice.

Although Calvin's discussions of politics are incidental, his interest in this theme is by no means casual. Few theologians have shown an equally positive attitude to government or a similar attention to political affairs. He asserts a divine sanction of the state, inculcates a positive attitude to politics and law, and persistently urges the principle of obedience to rulers. Whereas in his ecclesiology, he opposes medievalism, in his political theory the first enemy is Anabaptism. The *Insti-*

⁴ Breen, *John Calvin*, 84f.

⁵ *Opera*, V, 90ff.

⁶ Quoted by R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, VI (London, 1936), 298.

⁷ Elsewhere he notes, (citing Ps. 145:9: "His tender mercies are over all his works") that none of God's creatures fails to participate in the outpourings of his mercy. *Institutes*, I, v, 6.

⁸ *Institutes*, I, x, 2.

tutio was written at the time of the sanguinary Münster episode, and after years of Anabaptist propaganda which had asserted that the Christian is not a citizen in an earthly state and has nothing to do with civil government. For Calvin this is a very dangerous heresy. Substantially, it is true, he adopts the view that the state originates as a device to restrain sinners. But in no degree does this reduce the dignity and authority of the state. The state is a remedy for sin and its resulting social chaos, and, as Doumergue points out, it is emphatically a "*remède divin*," and has been instituted by God. It has a wide role to play with relation both to the church and to the general behavior and welfare of men. It exists in order to defend the church in her true doctrine and constitution (yet not to legislate on religion and worship), to promote social morality, mutual concord and public tranquility, to repress idolatry and blasphemy, to protect every man's property, to secure business honesty, to cultivate integrity and modesty—"in short, that a public form of religion may exist among Christians and humanity among men." Its maintenance is not less necessary to man than bread and water, light and air, since it helps to secure these, as well as higher, benefits.

Political authority for Calvin resides alike in the ruler and in the law, and he seeks to inculcate a deep respect for both. We shall see that he had a preference for the election of rulers by the people, but this is not our immediate concern. The calling of the magistrate is indeed "by far the most sacred and honorable in human life." Magistrates ought to remember that they are "vicegerents of God" and "ministers of divine justice," and to follow a course of integrity, clemency, and innocence. They are divinely raised to a dignity that demands our obedience, as St. Paul required even where the government least satisfactory was in force, "government by one man which is attended by the servitude of all." The magistrate is to defend the oppressed and protect the innocent, and in this he employs the power of the sword. He must use it mercifully, and shun excessive severity; but he must not weakly shrink from using it where the good of the many is at stake. He must resist invasion of his territory as well as any other aggressive violence and, as a last resort only, engage in war for defense and pacification. In the interests of the people, waste of public

9 E. Doumergue, *Jean Calvin, les hommes et les choses de son temps*, V (Lausanne, 1917), 399.

money is not to be tolerated. Magistrates have the right to levy taxes, but they are exhorted not to squander public funds, which are "the revenues of the people," and indeed "to be thought of as the very blood of the people."¹⁰

Evil and non-Christian governments are embraced in Calvin's demand for obedience to divinely authorized rulers. Undoubtedly most of what Calvin has to say of the state has reference to professedly Christian governments, of whose leaders he may expect attention to the claims of the church. He draws a line between the jurisdictions of church and state, but advocates a harmonious cooperation between them. State and church "are not contraries like water and fire, but things conjoined."¹¹ The Christian state is obligated to protect the church by the punishment of offenders against it. As a scriptural theologian Calvin could not, however, avoid the view that the non-Christian ruler also has the divine sanction. Commenting on Romans 13:1 he calls attention to the fact that the Apostle is urging obedience to a power that persecuted religion. Calvin enforces without the slightest reservation the whole argument of Paul here and in the later portions of the chapter. This involves an unqualified endorsement of the state, which is ordained for the rewarding of good and the punishment of evil men. Without discriminating between a Christian and a non-Christian government, he affirms that "the right of government was ordained for the health (*salutem*) of mankind." He notes, however, that Paul is speaking of the *higher*, not of the *highest*, power; the magistrate is always insistently subordinated to God.¹² Calvin wrote in the first edition of the *Institutes*, and carried to the last, these words: "Some deny that that state is well constituted which neglects the polity (*politicis*) of Moses, and is governed by the common law of nations (*communibus gentium legibus*). How dangerous and seditious this opinion is, let others observe. It will be enough for me to have shown it false and foolish."¹³

¹⁰ *Institutes* IV, xx, 5, 6, 9-13.

¹¹ *Homilies on I Samuel*, xxxviii, (I Sam. 11:6-10). *Opera*, XXIX, 659. There is something comparable to this in the view of S. T. Coleridge who regards the church as "the sustaining, correcting, befriending opposite of the world, the compensating counterforce to the inherent and inevitable evils and defects of the state." (S. T. Coleridge, "Idea of a Christian Church," in *Constitution of Church and State* (1839), 124. Calvin's definition of the church in its essentials would, of course, differ from Coleridge's.

¹² *Opera*, XLIX, 248ff.

¹³ *Institutes*, IV, xx, 14.

Hudson is entirely justified in his view that Calvin does not seek to restrict political authority and responsibility to the "elect."¹⁴ This would have been an illogical position in view of his insistence that we do not know with any certainty who are elect. The fact of anybody's election is known only to God. It would also have been inconsistent with his oft-repeated emphasis on the relative and defective but very real capacity of man for political morality. Here arise his two closely related and never adequately distinguished concepts of common grace (*gratia generalis*) and natural law. The truth that is found in pagan writers, "truth wherever it appears," cannot be despised without contempt of God. Calvin cites "the light of truth in the ancient lawyers" who gave us "just principles of civil order," and our debt to these gifted men who have obtained knowledge of "physics, logic, mathematics and other arts and sciences" even if they are persons without piety (*impii*). For men retain in their fallen state some "marks of the divine image." Man lacks an adequate natural knowledge of God, but possesses "powerful energies for the discovery of truth relating to the elements of this world."¹⁵ Moreover, God imparts special qualifications to special persons for their peculiar tasks such as government—a view for which he brings evidence from Homer as well as from Scripture.¹⁶

Natural law is the basis and criterion of positive law. Despite his high conception of the ruler, or magistrate, Calvin refuses to absolve him from the bonds of law. The magistrate is "the guardian of the laws."¹⁷ He finds this natural moral law exemplified in the laws of other nations than the Jews, though the Jews received it formulated explicitly in the Commandments. Thus the Commandments are a divine *testimonium* or attestation of the natural law and "of that conscience which is engraven by God on men's minds." The moral law requires: i,

14 W. S. Hudson, "Democratic Freedom and Religious Faith in the Reformed Tradition," *Church History*, XV (1946), 193.

15 Cf. Augsburg Confession, 18: "some liberty to work a civil righteousness."

16 *Institutes*, II, ii, 14-17. Cf. his Commentary on Titus: "They are superstitious who dare not borrow anything from profane writers. For since all truth is from God, if anything has been aptly or truly said by those who have not piety, it ought not to be repudiated, for it came from God. Since, then, all things are of God, why is it not right to refer to his glory whatever can properly be applied to that end?" *Opera* III, 414f., on Titus 1:12.

17 In a recent article, "Natural Law in the Thought of the Reformers," I have briefly illustrated Calvin's appropriation of the doctrine of natural law. *Journal of Religion*, XXVI (1946), 179ff.

that we worship God with sincere faith and piety; and ii, that if positive laws become barbarous or absurd, they ought not to be considered laws. In the latter statement Calvin is on traditional ground; he was anticipated by Cicero, Augustine, and Aquinas. All nations may enact what laws they find expedient, saving only that these be framed "according to the perpetual rule of love"—Calvin includes the "Love thy neighbor" and "Do unto others" passages under natural law—and have equity as their end, however they may vary according to the condition of the people for whom they are formulated. A Christian has not only the right, but also the duty, to go to law if he has a just claim, but only with benevolence and affection toward his adversary.¹⁸

Among the forms of government Calvin sometimes professes indifference on theoretical grounds,¹⁹ but on grounds of history and experience he exhibits a sharp dislike of kingship. His *Sermons on Job* (1554) contain lists of the offenses characteristic of the behavior of kings.²⁰ The *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (1554-55) present sweeping denunciations of royal wickedness.²¹ In his *Lectures on Daniel* (1561) he observes the sacrilegious pride, susceptibility to flattery and other faults of King Darius, and regards these as characteristic of monarchs and accentuated in modern princes. "We today may well weep," he writes, "over the heartlessness of kings," and "over the condition of the world" in which they bear sway. "If one could uncover the hearts of kings, he would find hardly one in a hundred who does not likewise despise everything divine."²² In his *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (1555-56) he makes it clear that he would prefer to have rulers elected by their subjects. "When," in the days of the Judges, "God gave such a privilege to the Jews, he ratified thereby his adoption and gave proof that he had chosen them for his inheritance, and that he desired that their condition should be better and more excellent than that of their neighbors, where there were kings and princes but no liberty . . . If we have the liberty to choose judges

18 *Institutes*, IV, xx, 14-18.

19 *Institutes*, IV, xx, 8.

20 *Sermons on Job*, xl (Job 10:16-17) and cxxxii (Job 19:26-29). *Opera*, XXXIII, 503; XXXIV, 138.

21 See for example *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, cvi (Deut. 17:16-20). *Opera*, XXVII, 479. Doumergue halts, in reporting such passages, "not daring to reproduce his invectives"—*Les vraies origines de la Démocratie moderne* (Paris, 1919), 61.

22 *Lectures on Daniel*, ch. vi. *Opera*, XLI, 1-22, especially columns 3 and 7.

and magistrates, since this is an excellent gift let it be preserved and let us use it in good conscience."²³ "If we argue about human governments we can say that to be in a free state is much better than to be under a prince." Disputes of this sort are unprofitable, but: "It is much more endurable to have rulers who are chosen and elected . . . and who acknowledge themselves subject to the laws, than to have a prince who gives utterance without reason." "Let those to whom God has given liberty and freedom (*franchise*) use it . . . as a singular benefit and a treasure that cannot be prized enough." "It is safer and more tolerable that government be in the hands of a number (*plures tenere gubernacula*), that they may be helpers of each other." Power should not be held by inheritance, and those elected should be required to render account of their service. Discussing the ancient Jewish state, he observes that the best and most desirable form of government is to have judges, that is, to be at liberty, while the laws bear sway.²⁴

Every student of Calvin's political thought must acknowledge a debt to Marc-Edouard Chenevière for his valuable monograph on that subject. But his anxiety to avoid the defects of the "liberal Protestant" interpretation of Calvin, has sometimes led him into unsafe ground. His short chapter on "Calvin and Monarchy"²⁵ expresses a point of view that I for one do not find convincing, even though it is partly supported from J. Bohatec. These authors reject the position earlier adopted by G. Beyerhaus and E. Doumergue, that Calvin combatted not only the abuses, but also the principle, of monarchy. In this connection Chenevière remarks:

If France had been ruled by a king favorable, or even simply neutral, toward the French Reformed, the sermons and commentaries of Calvin would probably have contained no complaint on the subject of monarchy. The aristocratic preferences of Calvin do not mean *ipso facto* rejection of the monarchical form of government.

In my judgment, this statement creates a somewhat misleading impression. I do not mean that Calvin ever said that no kings

23 *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, I (Deut. 16:18-19). *Opera*, XXVII, 410-11. I suggest that these sentences were intended to urge his Genevese hearers, as politically more favored than their (French) neighbors, to prize and maintain their republican form of government.

24 *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, cv (Deut. 18:14-18). *Opera*, XXVII, 458-60.

25 *La pensée politique de Calvin*, Part IV, Chapter vi (pp. 226-29). Cf. Josef Bohatec, *Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche* (Breslau, 1937), 118-24.

should exist, or that men should rid themselves of their monarchs. But his attitude to monarchy seems to me more unfavorable than Chenevière has here represented it. It is of course not accidental that his severest strictures on ancient and modern kings were uttered during the years when Mary in England and Henry II and (after 1562) Catherine de Medici in France, were putting their subjects to death by hundreds for the profession of Protestantism. Calvin also had seen such persecution on a smaller scale by Francis I, and this fact accounts for such passages as the closing paragraphs of the *Institutes*. Now, we should, I think, recognize that these facts helped to form his political ideas, and were as likely to cause a disapproval of *kingship* as to create in his mind merely a low view of *kings* in general. It is fair to say that a writer who habitually and emotionally harps on the abuses of an institution while rarely calling attention to its excellences, cannot be regarded as either a partisan of the institution or quite neutral toward it. One who persistently represents kings as abusers of their power, even though for scriptural reasons he opposes acts of rebellion against them, can hardly be regarded as indifferent to kingship itself. Let it be admitted that if kings had favored the Reformed Church, Calvin would not have scolded Darius: the fact is that they were unfavorable, and that Darius suffered for their actions in Calvin's treatment of him. This circumstance does not, I think, make it less but rather more likely that his animadversions upon Darius represent a revulsion to kingship itself, and a more or less conscious desire to create an anti-monarchical sentiment in the minds of his readers. Darius is treated as a type of kings as they are.

The statement of F. de Crue, quoted by Chenevière, that "*Calvin est un bon Français*" and that he supported the foreign policy of Henry II, must not be pressed too far. Henry's foreign policy, as it affected Germany and Switzerland, sometimes favored the Protestants of those countries. Calvin had prudential reasons for any suggestions of favor for Henry that he expressed. Even when urging Bullinger to support an alliance of the Swiss cantons with France, he looks upon Henry as a "wicked king" (May 7, 1549), and later writes to Farel, with reference to Henry and Charles V: "We should ask God to subdue their rage" (Aug. 19, 1550). Where the good cause stood to gain by the policies of kings, this was because

God used them for his purposes, not from any merit of kings or kingship.

Not monarchy then, of which he is highly critical, but "aristocracy, or aristocracy tempered by democracy"²⁶ is his choice. By aristocracy he means the rule of those best qualified, not of an hereditary caste. Ideally the aristocratic magistrate is one elected to his office, under that "liberty to choose judges and magistrates" which is an "excellent gift" of God. Calvin never elaborates an ample plan of representative government for the national state. He declines to sanction revolutionary efforts to overthrow monarchy, and he avoids everything of the nature of utopian incitements to change. But at heart he is a political republican. If we have the opportunity to elect our own rulers, God has favored us, and we must preserve our heritage. If God has not thus favored us, we must bear with what rulers we have.

Despite his censure of princes, Calvin has monotonously urged obedience to the ruler as a principle of the Christian life. To rebel against the ruler is to rebel against God. Assuredly it is always implied that where the honor of God is involved we must put obedience to God first. Calvin evidently implies also liberty to criticise misgovernment. This does not mean that we may resort to forcible resistance; it is frequently affirmed that the Christian under an unjust government should suffer, pray, and obey. Even an impious king may be the agent of God's judgment, and no private citizen may attack him.

For our encouragement, indeed, Calvin notes as an observation from history that God also from time to time lays tyrants low, and that He sometimes raises up powerful deliverers of the people from tyranny. In this connection his bold phrase: "Let princes hear and fear" (*audeant principes et terreantur*),²⁷ sounds like a revolutionary slogan. But it is God that they are to fear. Private persons are not to assume the task of liberation. Is no resistance then permissible?

It is just here that Calvin sets ajar the iron gate of the defenses of existing absolute governments. If magistrates have been appointed for the people's protection against the license of kings (*populares magistratus ad moderandam regum libidinem constituti*), as in the case of the Spartan ephors, Roman

²⁶ *Institutes*, IV, xx, 8.

²⁷ *Institutes*, IV, xx, 31.

tribunes, and Athenian demarchs, or "perhaps of the three estates" of modern kingdoms in their assemblies (*quum primarios conventus peragunt*), it would be nefarious perfidy on their part to connive at royal oppression and betray the liberty of the people, which they are under sacred obligation to defend.²⁸ This single intentionally emphatic and dynamic paragraph, found in all editions of the *Institutes*, links Calvin with the more radical Calvinist political writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here he unbarred the gate; a phalanx of champions of the people's rights against absolute and more or less tyrannical monarchs presently entered and ultimately stormed most of the bastions. This is the second last paragraph of the Latin *Institutes*. The last enforces the rule that in questions of obedience to government we ought always to obey God rather than men. Daniel rightly disobeyed an impious royal edict,²⁹ and Hosea justly condemns the obedience of Jeroboam's subjects to his demand for idolatrous worship.³⁰

Chenevière's whole interpretation tends to stress the unlikeness of Calvin's political thought to that of modern Western democracy. He holds, for example, that Calvin's *populares magistratus* while protectors of the people were in no sense their representatives, and were responsible to God alone.³¹ He minimizes Calvin's reference in this connection to the Estates General, a representative body, pointing out that the passage expresses only the possibility of an identification of the function of the Estates with that of the ancient magistrates used as examples. But, if we are looking for political principles here, let us note the nature of these examples that were,

28 I suggest that Zwingli may have supplied Calvin with this celebrated illustration. In his edited sermon, *Der Hirt*, delivered to the clergy attending the Zurich Disputation of January, 1523, and published in March, 1524, he says that as the Spartans had their ephors, the Romans their tribunes, and the German towns have their guild masters, with authority to check the higher rulers, so God has provided pastors as officers to stand on guard for the people *Zwinglis sämtliche Werke, III* (Leipzig, 1914), 36. The context is not political.

29 J. H. Allen discusses the question whether Calvin here intends to say that Darius by rising up against God *ipso facto* abrogated his power. *Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (1928), 57.

30 *Institutes*, V, xx, 19-32.

31 Chenevière, *La pensée politique de Calvin*, 335. For criticism of this view see Hans Baron, "Calvinist Republicanism and its Historical Roots," *Church History*, VIII (1939), 30-42, and Winthrop S. Hudson, "Democratic Freedom and Religious Faith in the Reformed Tradition," *Church History*, XV (1946), 177-94.

frankly and without any "perhaps," presented by Calvin in each edition of the *Institutes*. Calvin was assuredly aware that the *ephors* of Sparta, the *tribunes* of Rome and the *demarchs* of Athens were alike elected annually by popular vote and that they represented, in fact, the most democratic elements in the governmental institutions of Greece and Rome. Can we suppose the selection of these magistrates for mention in connection with the critical question of resistance, to be without significance for the democratic aspects of Calvin's thought? Assuredly not.

Hans Baron has done well to point out that Bucer early in the 1520's was exploring the possibility of resistance to "the superior authority" through the *magistratus inferiores*. Bucer also, in a work published in Geneva after his death, contended against "the absolute power (*absoluta potestas*) of the prince" as a derogation from "the glory and lordship of God," and favored elective as against hereditary monarchy.³¹ Calvin's intimacy with Bucer renders it a virtual certainty that, as Baron contends, he was utilizing the Strasbourg reformer's ideas at this point.

In the framework of a biblical conception of authority, both Bucer and Calvin referred all political power to God. It is God who sets up, and directs, elected magistrates no less than kings. To say that the protectors of the people are responsible only to God is not an adequate indication of the way in which Calvin viewed their responsibility. If that were all, Calvin would have no reason to cite the elected *populares magistratus* of pagan antiquity or the representative "estates" of European nations, as the means of defense against "the fierce license of kings." Nor is it any wonder that with reference to the estates Calvin said "perhaps" (*forte*): when he first wrote this the Estates General of France had not met for thirty years, nor did they meet again until after his last edition of the *Institutes*. Dr. Hudson has pointed out in this connection that Calvin in the Romans Commentary (on Rom. 13:4) states that rulers are responsible to God and to men in the exercise of their power.³³ A revealing passage in the Commentary on Micah may be cited in explanation of his view of this double responsibility of the ruler. Calvin is discussing

32 Baron, "Calvinist Republicanism," 35ff.

33 Hudson, "Democratic Freedom," 193. Cf. Calvin, *Opera* XLIX, 251: "Denique Deo et hominibus in sua principatu sunt obligati."

Micah 5:5: "then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men." The essential Latin words are "*constituemus*," "*pastores*" and "*principes hominum*." He finds in this sentence authorization of popular elections of the rulers of the church-state. Calvin's "*Statuemus, hoc est, Deligemus*" (we shall set up, that is, choose) is emphatic: the people do the choosing. If anyone objects that the setting up of "shepherds" is the office of God, not of men, the reply is:

For he [the prophet] commends the gracious gift of God that their liberty is again secured to the people. For the condition of the people most to be desired is (*maxime est optabilis status populi*) that in which they create their shepherds by general vote (*communibus suffragiis*). For when anyone by force usurps the supreme power, that is tyranny. Also where men are born to kingship, this does not seem to be in accordance with liberty. Hence the prophet says: we shall set up princes for ourselves; that is, the Lord will not only give to the church freedom to breathe, but also institute a definite and well-ordered government, and establish this upon the common suffrages of all.³⁴

This passage is characteristic of Calvin in that it indicates how, with a complete absence of embarrassment, he associates theocratic with democratic concepts and blends the patterns of government for church and state.

Calvin does not make an intellectual dilemma of the magistrate's twofold responsibility to God and to man: he does not, apparently, see here any dilemma. Nobody doubts his insistence on the divine lordship over all things, human government included. Bohatec's point of view here differs, however, from that of Chenevière, and is, I think, more in accord with the facts. This writer finds the reformer setting his "aristocracy-democracy" formula over against the absolutisms of his age, including that of France. In view of Calvin's conception of the magistrate as enabled for his task by the Holy Ghost, Bohatec suggests the term "pneumatocracy" instead of "theocracy" as an index to his political teaching.³⁵

Calvin is never tired of repeating that we must obey God rather than men. But God is the author of governments in which men participate with the functions appropriate to their status, whether as citizens or as rulers. If we call his political

³⁴ *Opera*, XLIII, 374.

³⁵ "Zur Eigenart des 'theokratischen' Gedankens bei Calvin" in *Aus Theologie und Geschichte der Reformierten Kirche*, Festgabe für E. F. K. Müller (Erlangen, 1933), 122-57.

ideal "theocratic," or with Bohatec "pneumatocratic," we may not say that it was therefore anti-democratic. It is not Calvin's subjection of the ruler to God that makes him cautious on the side of democracy. It is rather his fear of disorderly excesses. He was trying to combine with this responsibility to God two principles that are always in tension. Ludwig Cardauns has represented his political system as built around three doctrines: "i. subordination of the political to the divine order; ii. a preference for liberal institutions; and iii. opposition to forcible disturbance of the *status quo*."³⁶ The indeterminate point here is not the first factor, but the relation of the other two. It is the ever live problem of the relation of liberty and order, of change and stability. Calvin's letters show a good deal of adjustment of his advice to conditions. But in general he stood firmly on the ground that liberty should not be permitted to subvert an established public order. The principle of order is divine: it was imparted to man at creation and is possessed in common by mankind. If it were otherwise, government and society would be impossible. Thus Calvin forbids the individual to resist oppression and lays the task of such resistance upon the constituted magistracy.

If we test a writer's attitude to democracy by his references to "liberty, equality and fraternity," we find Calvin highly positive on the first and last of these: on equality his position is less unequivocal. His praise of liberty under laws has already been illustrated. In his *Homilies on I Samuel* he twice refers to liberty as "an inestimable good." The Hebrew people, prizing too lightly this priceless boon, lost it when they demanded a king.³⁷ Liberty is something to be held in the highest esteem and to be strenuously maintained. On the passage, "Rejoice Zebulun in thy going out and Issachar in thy tents" (Deut. 33:18), Calvin pours contempt upon Issachar as a type of those who, though strong and able, lose liberty through faintheartedness and sloth.³⁸ Commenting on Deuteronomy 24:7, he speaks of liberty as "more than the half of life."³⁹ There is no doubt about Calvin's espousal of liberty; but it is

36 *Die Lehre vom Widerstandsrecht des Volkes gegen die rechtmässige Obrigkeit im Luthertum und im Calvinismus des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn, 1903), 41ff.

37 "libertatem bonus inestimabile parvi faciens perdidit." *Homilies on I Samuel*, ix, on I Samuel 17:1-11. *Opera*, XXX, 185. Cf. Hom. xxvii, on I Samuel 8:1-6. *Opera*, XXIX, 544.

38 *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, cxvi. *Opera*, XXIX, 172.

39 *Opera*, XXIV, 627.

always a liberty limited by law and duty, and is never interpreted in revolutionary terms.

Calvin has much to say of equity, little of equality. He cannot be regarded as an egalitarian in economics or a leveller in relation to existing social and political stratifications. Yet there is emphasis on equality before the law. All are to receive equal justice, and the ruler is to have a special care for the protection of the poor and the weak. While there are different orders in society, none of these is dominant over another. There is no privileged caste depriving others of voice and rights. In the church order which Calvin instituted, laymen and clergy had equal voting status and the greatest as well as the least were subjected to the discipline. In his schools all the young had equal educational advantages regardless of birth or wealth. In December, 1557, the Little Council of Geneva instituted a plan for periodic meetings devoted to "loving and mutual censures" in which the members of this political body would "remonstrate with each other in fraternal charity." No one is more aware than Calvin that God has not made men equal in talent; but all except idiots share His gifts in nature, while all have a common need of salvation from sin. It is emphasized that humanity is a great family created of one blood.⁴⁰

Calvin insistently teaches a doctrine of fraternity. In his very frequent use of the words "fraternity" and "fraternal" his reference is no doubt primarily to the New Testament doctrines of divine fatherhood and brotherly love (*philadelphia*). Masters and kings are not so to domineer as to bring others into servitude. The world was not created for them: rather they were created for the multitude. Ruler and ruled have a common Creator and Father, who has endowed them with intelligence and stamped his image upon them. "He declares not only that He is Creator of the human race, of the poor as

40 Cf. E. Doumergue, *Jean Calvin, les hommes et les choses de son temps*, V (1917), 442f.; VII (1927), 167ff. The magistrates were following in this mutual admonition, the practice Calvin had established for the ministers. James Mackinnon remarks that it was "a unique attempt to apply the Christian spirit to the art of politics"—*Calvin and the Reformation*, (London, 1936), 163. This is of course exactly what Calvin advocates on the whole political front. But the "Grabeau," as this meeting of the Council for correction of its members was called, is a remarkable application of the principle of *corruptio fraterna* (or *mutua*); which is scriptural (Cf. 2 Thess. 3:15) and often asserted by the Church Fathers. The "chapter of culps" in monasticism is its best medieval institutional expression. By Luther, Bucer, and other Reformers it was associated with the doctrine of the mutual priesthood of all Christians, along with its counterpart, *aedificatio mutua* (Rom. 14:19; I Thess. 5:11).

of the rich, of servants as of masters, but He calls Himself Father; thus it is needful that we have fraternity with one another, if we would not renounce the grace of our God. We see how Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory was abased to the estate of a servant of servants . . .⁴¹ The spirit of fraternity must be observed not only within the communion of the church, but in relation to society and to all men. Even the "poor pagans" knew that there could not be good government where each devoted himself to his private profit.⁴² In the state a mutual obligation exists between ruler and people, of which the law is a bond and a symbol. "The people are to be subject to their kings and the kings in turn are to obey and be subject to the laws."⁴³ All the members are bound together in a mutual bond of subjection.⁴⁴ "To embrace men in sincere love" is enjoined by natural moral law. We are to do good to all men, considering not their merit but the image of God in them. Strangers, and seemingly contemptible people bear this image: we must serve them as we serve God. "The divine image in them allures us to embrace them in the arms of our love."⁴⁵

We have noted the close parallel between Calvin's conceptions of church polity and of the structure of political government. In church as in state matters, he was cautious and conservative in the authorization of democratic elements. In the Reformed churches of the sixteenth century, especially those of France and Scotland, we see clearly drawn the outlines of a representative system. Calvin was not the direct author of these polities, but they were inspired in large degree by his ideas. The conservatism of his own position is shown in his attitude to a democratic project of the early years of the French Reformed Church. The Discipline adopted in 1559 provided for the admission of ministers to their office by the provincial synod, or by the colloquy (a body corresponding to the presbytery in Scottish and American Presbyterianism), not by the local consistory, nor by the congregation. A majority of the

41 *Sermons on Job*, cxiii, (Job 31:9-14). *Opera*, XXXIV, 655-60.

42 *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, xvi (Deut. 3:12-22). *Opera*, XXVI, 70.

43 *Homilies on I Samuel*, xxix. (I Samuel 8:11-22). *Opera*, XXIX, 564f.

44 Denique omnes gradus politici ad tuendum universi corporis statum pertinent. Quod fieri non potest nisi membra omnia mutuo subjectionis nexu inter se cohaerant. *Commentary on I Peter*. (I Pet. 5:5) *Opera*, LV, 287. Cf. H. Baron, *Calvins Staatsanschauung und das konfessionelle Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1924), 78ff; J. Bohatec, *Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche* (Breslau, 1937), 91ff; 239ff.

45 *Institutes*, III, vi, 8.

congregation, however, must approve the appointment of a minister. The Discipline also required that new members of the consistory, the local ruling body of ministers and elders, should be chosen by the consistory with the minister. Jean Morelli, a Paris minister, proposed a further democratization. He offered a plan by which the congregation would have an unrestricted right to elect its own officers. Calvin's opposition to this proposal resulted in its rejection by the national synod of Orleans in 1562, and Morelli's continued agitation finally led to his excommunication. Thus it is evident that Calvin sought to apply his idea of "aristocracy mingled with democracy" in the church no less than in the state. Against monarchy (exercised by a human agent) in the church he was of course vehemently outspoken. This condemnation applies not only to the papacy but to the hierarchical order. It is wrong that men are made bishops "by permission of the pope" and by action of the canons in such manner that "the people's right to choose has been wholly taken away."⁴⁶ Calvin restored this right, with cautious restrictions, in Geneva and approved everywhere a reference of certain important matters, including the settlement of pastors, to the vote of the people. With this element of democracy, the system he approved contained the element of aristocracy, in the ordination of pastors and elders who formed essentially self-perpetuating bodies within the Christian community.

"Democracy" is not a term in favor with Calvin. He does not advocate democracy in and of itself: he fears its deterioration into anarchy. Nevertheless, his notion of "aristocracy tempered by democracy" approaches our conception of representative democracy. It becomes unmistakably clear in his later writings that the ideal basis of government is election by the citizens.

Perhaps it was because he shrank from every suggestion of revolution that Calvin presented nothing of the nature of a blue-print for a system of representative government for the national state. He utterly distrusts government directly by the masses. The middle way of an elective "aristocracy" is his solution. Consistent with this was his policy in Geneva. He found Geneva an autonomous city whose armed citizens had shaken off feudal and episcopal control. It was in a stage of

⁴⁶ *Institutes* IV, v, 2.

post-revolution instability. A government by elective councils and by the general meeting of citizens was taking shape. The changes effected in Calvin's time, for which he was largely, though in uncertain degree, responsible, centered control more closely in the Little Council and the four Syndics. Proposals for legislation had to pass in turn the Little Council, the Council of Sixty, the Council of Two Hundred, and the Grand Council of all citizens. The Council of Two Hundred was composed of nominees of the Little Council, and the majority of the members of the Little Council were chosen by the Two Hundred. This interlocking of the councils was an oligarchical element, but correctives of oligarchy are also in evidence. The meeting of citizens once a year elected the four Syndics who were the chief administrators and judges of the city; and it chose to this office, by secret ballot, two from the wealthier and two from the poorer class of citizens. It also elected the commander of the militia, and some other officials.⁴⁷ In February, 1560, Calvin addressed the General Assembly of citizens urging them "to choose (their magistrates) with a pure conscience, without regard to anything but the honor and glory of God, for the safety and defense of the republic."⁴⁸ Thus the chief rulers were not an established aristocracy either of birth or of special privilege. The elective principle was retained in this conservative democracy—for we may so designate the system; and since the principal elections were annual, there was a considerable shift of public servants.

Calvin never took to himself any political office or title and, although ridicule of him and of the other ministers was made a punishable offense, he never used soldiers to protect his person. As Pierre Mesnard points out, "he was not king, mayor, president or protector."⁴⁹ He was not eligible for political office, since he was not a citizen, until the end of the year 1559. Until 1555 his position was quite insecure: although thereafter it was not in fact endangered, at any time a popular movement could have thrown him out by constitutional means. Within the church he was permitted to erect a system of discipline that was rigorous and intolerant. Calvin was

47 P. Henry, *The Life and Times of John Calvin*. Translated from the German by H. Stebbing (New York, 1851), I, 354ff.

48 Opera, XXI, 7, 8. Cf. J. Mackinnon, *Calvin and the Reformation* (London, 1936), 163.

49 *L'Essor de la philosophie politique au XVIe siècle* (Paris 1936), 306.

masterful, sometimes vindictive, and often harsh; but politically he used constitutional methods and won his way (when he got it) by the persuasion of his fervid oratory. Under his leadership Geneva became a firmly established republic; quite conceivably, if more had been left to the council of citizens, factions would have destroyed the stability of the government.

In a single sentence Calvin defines what he thinks the ideal government: "I readily acknowledge that no kind of government is more happy than this, where liberty is regulated with becoming moderation, and properly established on a durable basis (*ad diuturnitatem*)"⁵⁰ No doubt he felt that Geneva was attaining to this status of regulated and enduring liberty, though we today would be far from content with the "liberty" that remained under the "regulation."

⁵⁰ *Institutes*, IV, xx, 8.

THE RETRACTATIONES OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

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In the year 427, when Saint Augustine was seventy-two years of age, he began to work on a treatise which he called the *Retractationes*. This was a task he had been wanting to accomplish since 412, when the idea first occurred to him, as he confessed to Marcellinus,¹ "to gather together and point out, in a work devoted to this express purpose, all the things which most justly displease me in my books." He states in the Prologue to the *Retractationes* that he finally felt forced to begin the work. "For a long time I have been thinking over and planning a task which, with the help of the Lord, I am now beginning, because I think it should be postponed no longer: namely, to review my writings, whether books, letters, or tractates, with a kind of judicial severity, and to indicate, as if with a censor's pen, what displeases me."²

Augustine had just finished writing his treatises *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* and *De Correptione et Gratia*, both of which belong in the latter part of 426 or the early part of 427, when he had begun to reflect on the ninety-three treatises in 232 books (volumes) he had written and to evaluate his works in the same spirit of deep personal humility which had characterized his *Confessiones*.³ His original plan was to review all his writings, including the tractates, letters, and sermons, but he never did get an opportunity to publish his review of his letters and sermons. When he had completed the revision of his long list of books, he turned his attention to a new opponent, Julian of Eclanum; this gave rise to a new literary activity on the part of the Bishop of Hippo. Augustine described his difficulties in a letter to Quoduultdeus, who had asked him to draw up a treatise on heresies:

I am busy over a very urgent matter: I am passing in review all my writings and am trying to show either by correcting it or defending it, what should be and can be read, where, that is, anything I have written

¹ *Epistolae* CXLIII, 2. English translation by J. G. Pilkington in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (First Series), I, 490.

² *Retractationes*. Prologue, 1.

³ Eugene Portalié, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, II, 89, says that the *Confessiones* contains the history of Augustine's heart; the *Retractationes*, of his mind.

displeases me or might give offence to others. I have already finished two volumes in this rehandling all my books; of their number I was unaware; I now find they come to two hundred and thirty-two. There yet remain my letters, also tractates delivered to the people, what the Greeks term "homilies." I had already re-read some of my letters but had dictated nothing regarding them when Julian's last volumes began to take up my time . . . I have then to work at both tasks at once, namely, answer Julian and pass my books in review, devoting the day to one, the night to the other.⁴

The title of this work of Saint Augustine's does not correctly describe the intention and purpose of the author, nor does it adequately indicate the nature of the contents. The word "*retractationes*" is not the equivalent of the English word "retractions"; better translations would be "review," "retreatment," or "revision." It is very seldom that Augustine is compelled to "retract" anything. Significantly enough, Possidius, Augustine's friend and biographer, refers to this work of Augustine's as *De Recensione Librorum*:

And in those works which he had dictated or written while he was as yet not so well acquainted with ecclesiastical usage and had less understanding, whatsoever he found not agreeing with the ecclesiastical rule, this he himself censured and corrected. Thus he wrote two volumes whose title is *On the Revision of Books* . . .⁵

The *Retractationes* is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to those treatises which Augustine had written as a layman and a priest; in twenty-six treatises, Augustine finds one hundred sixty-seven places to revise. The second section deals with those treatises, sixty-seven in number, which Augustine wrote after his elevation to the episcopate; in these, he finds only fifty-two places to correct. In the last thirty treatises Saint Augustine found only thirteen statements that stood in need of revision. This shows very clearly that there is progress in Augustine's writings in the direction of Catholic orthodoxy. In fact, that was one of his purposes in writing the *Retractationes*; he arranged his works in chronological order (though his memory was not always reliable in this respect) so that, as he said, "whoever reads my works in the order in which they were written will probably discover that I did make progress as I wrote."⁶

4 *Epistulae* CCXXIV, 2. Translation by Hugh Pope, *Saint Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1937), 365.

5 *Vita Augustini*, xxviii, Translation by Herbert T. Weiskotten in his edition of the *Sancti Augustini Vita scripta a Possidio* (Princeton, 1919).

6 *Retractationes*, Prologue 3.

In general, Augustine's revisions may be placed in several categories: doctrinal, exegetical, and those in which he disavows his earlier connections with pagan philosophy. In his letter to Marcellinus, Augustine mentions that the incorrectness of many of his earlier doctrinal statements was brought to his attention by Marcellinus' reference to one of the passages in Augustine's treatise *De Libero Arbitrio*.⁷ He admits its error and that confession starts him on the task of finding other similar passages equally erroneous. In opposition to the Pelagians, he clarifies his views on free will, grace, predestination, original sin, merits, and the nature of the soul.⁸

Augustine's review of his treatise *De Libero Arbitrio* is one of the longest of the ninety-three chapters of the *Retractiones*. Apparently many of the things he had said in this work were used by the Pelagians against him:

Wherefore, the new heretics, the Pelagians, who so bring forward the freedom of the will as to have no place for the grace of God, because they maintain that it is given according to our merits, let them not exalt themselves as though I had advanced their cause; because I said many things in these books in favor of free will, which the purpose of that discussion required.⁹ I did indeed say in the first book: "The righteousness of God punishes evil works" and I added: "for they are not punished justly if they did not do them voluntarily" (*De Libero Arbitrio*, I, i, 1).¹⁰

Then Augustine quotes from thirteen other passages in the same treatise which Pelagius had used:

From these and similar words of mine the Pelagians suppose or are able to suppose that we held their position, because the grace of God was not mentioned, though at that time it was not being discussed. But it is to no purpose that they believe this. Obviously, that it is by the will we sin and live uprightly is what I was treating of in these words. The will . . . is aided to rise above vice only by the grace of God; only so can mortals live uprightly and religiously.¹¹

Then Augustine quotes from four sections of *De Libero Arbitrio* in which he had dealt with the grace of God; for

⁷ *Epistulae*, CXLIII, 2.

⁸ Harnack's essay before the Royal Prussian Academy on December 21, 1905, entitled *Die Retractionen Augustins*, has the only complete catalogue of all of Augustine's 219 retractions. It is the one indispensable work in this field.

⁹ Augustine began to write *De Libero Arbitrio* in 388 in Rome for the purpose of confuting the Manichaeans, who denied that sin originated in man's free will and contended that God was the origin of evil. This did not seem to call for a treatment of the doctrine of the grace of God, Augustine thought.

¹⁰ *Retractiones*, I, viii, 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I, viii, 4.

example, he had said: "Inasmuch as man is not able to rise, as he fell, by his own free will, let us cling by firm faith to the right hand of God stretched out to us from above, i. e., and our Lord Jesus Christ."¹²

The Pelagians had also quoted from Augustine's treatise *De Genesi Adversus Manicheos* in support of their position. Augustine corrects them:

Now I said this: "However that light delights not the eyes of the birds, who are without reason, but the pure hearts of those who believe God turn from the love of visible and temporal things to the fulfilling of his commands; every man can do that if he wants to."¹³ Let not the new heretics, the Pelagians, think that this was said to their advantage. For it is true that all men generally can do it if they want to. But "the will is prepared by the Lord"¹⁴ and it is increased as much as possible by the gift of love. This was not said here since it was not related to the matter in question.¹⁵

Again, in his review of a certain passage in his treatise *De Duabus Animabus* (x, 12) Augustine explains, in what seems to him an adequate way, why he had said that there was no sin apart from the will.¹⁶ But the doctrine of his later anti-Pelagian treatises represents so marked a change in his attitude from that of these early anti-Manichaean treatises that the attempt in the *Retractationes* to show the consistency between the two is not altogether successful. This leads Albert H. Newman to say:

The fact is that in the anti-Manichaean time he went too far in maintaining the absolute freedom of the will and the impossibility of sin apart from the personal will in the sinner; while in the anti-Pelagian time he had ventured too near to the fatalism that he so earnestly combated in the Manichaeans.¹⁷

These and other similar passages in the *Retractationes* would lead us to the conclusion that this work, far from being simply a catalogue of Augustine's books, had a definite polemical purpose. Augustine wrote it in the midst of his fight against the Pelagians and he took advantage of every opportunity afforded to combat their heresy.

¹² *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, xx, 54. Obviously the Pelagians had overlooked these passages in *De Libero Arbitrio* when they said that Augustine had not dealt with the doctrine of grace.

¹³ *De Genesi Adversus Manicheos*, I, iii, 6.

¹⁴ Proverbs 8:35 (Septuagint).

¹⁵ *Retractationes*, I, ix, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, xiv, 3.

¹⁷ *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, IV, 102, n. 1.

Other doctrinal matters are discussed in the *Retractationes*. For example, when he reviews *De Fide et Symbolo*, he states his firm belief that the substance of the human body will be revived in the after-life, just as in the case of the body of Jesus after his resurrection.¹⁸ Augustine's doctrine of election comes out in his review of *Expositio Quarundam Propositionum ex Epistula Apostoli ad Romanos*:

And on this account, I afterwards also said this: "Because we cannot will unless we are called, and since we have willed after the calling, our will and our way are not adequate unless God both gives strength to those who run the race and conducts them whither he summons them," and then I added: "Therefore, it is evident that what we work faithfully is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has compassion;"¹⁹ this is doubtless very true. But I did not sufficiently discuss that calling which is made according to the purpose of God;²⁰ for this is not true of all who are called, but only of those who are chosen.²¹

He speaks of the Christian religion as having existed even before Christ came:

Further, I said this: "This is the Christian religion in our time; the safest and surest salvation is to know and follow it";²² this was said in accordance with the name, not in accordance with the truth of which this is the name. For the truth itself, which is now named the Christian religion, existed and was not missing among the ancients from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came "in the flesh" from whom the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian . . .²³ I said: "This is the Christian religion in our time," not because it did not exist in former times, but because it got this name in later times.²⁴

He sharply criticizes one of his earlier views concerning the soul:

By chance this was also said: "For the supreme sense I have bestowed the form of the body upon the soul, by which it exists so far as it ever does exist. Therefore, the body stands firm because of the soul and it exists in the same way in which it is inspired, whether universally, as the world, or particularly, as a living being within the world";²⁵ this whole passage was said absolutely inconsiderately.²⁶

18 *Retractationes*, I, xvi, 2.

19 Romans 9:16, quoted in *Expositio Quarundam Propositionum ex Epistula Apostoli ad Romanos*, 62.

20 Romans 9:11.

21 *Retractationes*, I, xxii, 6.

22 *De Vera Religione*, x, 19.

23 I John 4:2; II John 7.

24 *Retractationes*, I, xii, 3.

25 *De Immortalitate Animae*, xv, 24.

26 *Retractationes*, I, v, 4.

Augustine corrects those passages in his earlier writings in which he had asserted the sufficiency and blessedness of this earthly life.

And that statement does not please me in which I said that the soul, after God has been comprehended, is now blessed in this life,²⁷ unless perhaps, by hope.²⁸

I also said: "For there are two (kinds of) persons commendable in religion: one (made up) of those who have already discovered, who must be also considered most blessed: the other, of those who are making inquiry very zealously and very excellently. Therefore, the first are already in very possession, the others on the way, by which nevertheless, they will most certainly arrive."²⁹ In these words of mine, if those who have already discovered, whom we have said to be already in very possession, are understood to be most blessed in such a way that they are not in this life, but in that life for which we hope and toward which we strive by the reach of faith, there is no error in this thought, for they are to be judged as having found that which is to be sought; they are already there, where we are desirous of coming by seeking and believing,³⁰ i.e., by keeping the path of faith. But if they are thought to be, or to have been, of such a kind in this life, that does not seem to me to be true, not because nothing true at all in this life can be discovered which is comprehended by the mind³¹ and not believed on faith, but because whatever there is is so little that it does not make men most blessed.³²

In four places in the *Retractationes* Augustine expresses his belief that the substance of the human body will be revived in the after-life, just as in the case of the body of Jesus after his resurrection.³³ In reviewing his *Expositio Quarundam Propositionum ex Epistula Apostoli ad Romanos*,³⁴ Augustine corrects an earlier incorrect view of the genesis of faith; he now asserts that both faith and works are gifts of God and also that both are the results of the exercise of our freedom of will.

Augustine's exegetical retractations are scattered throughout his work. He makes nine corrections on the basis of a better knowledge of the Bible text. The following examples are typical of this group:

27 *Soliloquia*, I, vii, 14.

28 *Retractationes*, I, iv, 5.

29 *De Utilitate Credendi*, xi, 25.

30 Matthew 7:7, 8; Luke 11:9, 10.

31 Cicero, *Academica*, II, 59, 66, 76.

32 *Retractationes*, I, xiii, 3.

33 I, xvi, 2; xxi, 4; xxv, 10; II, xxix, 2.

34 *Retractationes*, I, xxii.

We also understood better later³⁵ what was written: "Whoever is angry with his brother,"³⁶ for the Greek manuscripts do not have "without cause," as it was cited in the passage under consideration, although it has the same meaning. For we said, observing what it is to be angry with one's brother, that one who is angry with the sin of one's brother is not angry with the brother. Consequently, one who is angry with his brother and not angry with the sin is angry without cause.³⁷

Accordingly, in the book which has to do with the morals of the Catholic Church, where I put down as proof³⁸ that passage which contains these words: "Since we are suffering the whole day for your sake, we are rated as sheep,"³⁹ the inaccuracy of our manuscript led me into error as did my recollection of the Scriptures, with which I was not yet familiar. For the other manuscripts do not have the same meaning: instead of "we are suffering for your sake" they have "we are suffering death for your sake," which others state in a single word: "We are killed." The Greek books, from which language a translation of the Old Testament was made into Latin following the Septuagint translators, show that this is more correct.⁴⁰

And in another place I said this: "Just as the apostle says: 'All order is from God;'"⁴¹ the apostle did not say it in those same words, although that seemed to be the thought. In fact, he says: "But those that do exist are ordained of God."⁴²

He revises the interpretations of Scripture passages he had made in his earlier writings. The following excerpt illustrates the fact that Augustine's purpose in many of his exegetical retractations was often in the direction of cautious conservatism.

I also said this: "The word 'sons' is understood in three ways in the Scriptures;"⁴³ this was said with too little consideration. For we without doubt overlooked the fact that the word could be understood in certain other ways also, as it is said: "a son of Gehenna,"⁴⁴ or "a son by adoption,"⁴⁵ which are not all stated in accordance with nature, doctrine, or

35 *De Civitate Dei*, XXI, xxvii.

36 Matthew 5:22.

37 *Retractationes*, I, xviii, 7.

38 Of the agreement of the Old and New Testaments, in opposition to the Manichaean view that parts of the Scripture should be rejected.

39 Psalm 44:22, quoted by Paul in Romans 8:36 and referred to by Augustine in *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manicheorum*, I, ix, 14, 15.

40 *Retractationes*, I, vi, 2.

41 Romans 13:1, which Augustine quotes in *De Vera Religione*, xli, 77.

42 *Retractationes*, I, xii, 10. Other corrections Augustine makes on the basis of a better knowledge of the Bible text may be found in *Retractationes*, I, vi, 3, 4; ix, 6; xx, 5; II, xxxviii, 2; 1, 2 (cf. also II, xliii, 2, and I, xxiii, 4; in the latter Augustine makes an interesting change in the punctuation of a passage of Scripture in the light of new textual knowledge).

43 *Contra Adimantum Manichei Discipulum*, v, 1.

44 Matthew 23:13.

45 Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5.

imitation. Of these three ways we gave examples, as if they were the only ways: in accordance with nature as the Jews were "sons of Abraham";⁴⁶ in accordance with doctrine, as the apostle calls those his sons whom he caused to know the gospel;⁴⁷ in accordance with imitation, as "we are sons of Abraham,"⁴⁸ whose faith we imitate.⁴⁹

In his earlier writings Saint Augustine had casually supposed that the penitent thief had not been baptized.⁵⁰ In the *Retractationes* he stresses the fact that the text is, in general, silent about this question; thus it is possible, even probable, that he was baptized.⁵¹ This interpretation fitted in very well in Augustine's fight against the Donatists and the Pelagians, especially the latter.⁵² The problem of the discrepancies in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke comes up for consideration in four places in the *Retractationes*;⁵³ Augustine has a very neat solution: Joseph has two fathers, Jacob (Matthew 1:16) and Heli (Luke 3:23), who were brothers; Joseph was begotten by Heli and, after his death, was adopted by Jacob, in accordance with the Jewish law which compelled a man to marry the widow of his deceased brother,⁵⁴ and bring up children for his brother. What Augustine regrets about his earlier statement is that he ought to have mentioned the kind of adoption, for what he said "sounds as if another living father adopted him."⁵⁵

With complete frankness Augustine disavows his earlier connections with pagan philosophy. He is now sorry he had used pagan words in his earliest writings. In his treatise *De Academicis* (written at Cassiciacum in the year 386) Augustine had used the word "fortune" six times;⁵⁶ although, he says, "I did not want this word to mean some goddess, but the accidental consequence of events, whether bodily or external to

46 John 8:37.

47 I Corinthians 4:14, 15.

48 Galatians 3:7.

49 Hebrews 13:7. The section is *Retractationes*, I, xxi, 3.

50 Luke 23:43, which appears in Augustine's *Quaestionum*, III, lxxxiv; *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octaginta Tribus*, lxii; and *De Baptismo*, IV, xxii, 29.

51 *Retractationes*, I, xxv, 63; II, xlv, 3; lxxxi, 5.

52 *Retractationes*, II, xxx, 2.

53 II, xxxiii, 2; xxxviii, 3; xlii, 3; lxxxi, 6.

54 Deuteronomy 25:5, 6, quoted in Matthew 22:24, Mark 12:19, and Luke 20:28. The first to use this idea in reconciling the discrepancies between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke was Julius Africanus, a Christian historian of the third century; he gives the name of the mother of Jacob and Heli.

55 *Retractationes*, II, xxxiii, 2, where Augustine is reviewing *Contra Faustum Manicheum*, III, 3.

56 I, ii, 1; II, i, 1; iii, 9; III, ii, 2, 3, 4.

the body, whether good or bad . . . Nevertheless, I am sorry that I mentioned this word 'fortune' in that way in that passage, since I see that men have a very bad practice of saying: 'Fortune willed this,' when they ought to say: 'God willed this.'"⁵⁷ The word "omen" was another word Augustine now wished he had not used.⁵⁸

Augustine moves away from pagan philosophy, especially that of Plato, and from those Christian authors of insufficient orthodoxy, such as Origen. In reviewing his *De Academicis*, he says:

Also the very praise which I bestowed upon Plato and the Platonists (or the Academician philosophers) so much more than was due ungodly men, displeased me not without cause. Christian doctrine has to be particularly defended against their errors.⁵⁹

Even though he approves of Plato's concept of "an intelligible world," Augustine does not think he should have used that phrase in *De Ordine* (I, xi, 32), for it "is very rare in that connection in ecclesiastical usage."⁶⁰ Pythagoras is another heathen philosopher Augustine lists as not being worthy of his admiration; he says:

I am not pleased by the fact that I conferred on the philosopher Pythagoras so much praise, that whoever hears or reads might believe that I was of the opinion that there were no errors in the Pythagorean teachings,⁶¹ because they are many and they are pernicious.⁶²

Augustine rejects Plato's doctrine of reminiscence.⁶³ He criticizes Origen's views on immortality:

In the other book, the title of which is *On the Morals of the Manichaeans*, I said this: "The goodness of God regulates all things which fall away in such a way that they may exist most suitably, until, in the regulation of their motions, they return to that whence they have fallen away";⁶⁴

57 *Retractationes*, I, i, 2. Other places where Augustine repudiates his use of the word "fortune" are in *Retractationes*, I, ii, 3, iii, 2 (cf. his *De Ordine*, II, ix, 27).

58 *Retractationes*, I, i, 6. Augustine says when he used this word in his *De Academicis*, I, iv, 11, he was only joking, but he admits he should not have used such a word, because he could not recall having read it in any of the Christian writings.

59 *Retractationes*, I, i, 12.

60 *Retractationes*, I, iii, 8.

61 *De Ordine*, II, xx, 53, 54.

62 *Retractationes*, I, ii, 10. (cf. *De Civitate Dei*, VI, v; VII, xxxv).

63 *Retractationes*, I, iv, 8. (cf. *De Trinitate*, IX, vi, 11; vii, 12; XII, xv).

64 *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manicheorum*, II, vii, 9.

this should not be understood as if all things "return to that from which they have fallen away," as Origen thought, but all things which actually do return. For they who will be punished in everlasting fire will not return to God from whom they have fallen away, although "all the failures" are regulated so "that they may exist where they can exist most suitably," because those who do not return exist more suitably in punishment.⁶⁵

He attacks Plato's conception of the soul⁶⁶—namely, "that the soul has lived either in another body or at another place or that it has lived in the body or outside of the body at some time or other."

In the *Retractationes* Augustine berates himself for having spoken too confidently in his earlier writings; as he reached maturity his language became more prudent. For example, in his treatise *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manicheorum* (II, xvii, 63) Augustine had accepted unthinkingly a conclusion he had found in Pliny's *Natural History* (XI, xxviii, 34) that beetles are produced from the mud which they have rounded into a ball and buried. Now, Augustine says that many people doubt whether this is true and many have never even heard of it.⁶⁷ He says he was not sufficiently deliberate when he described the firmament as "between the spiritual upper waters and the corporeal lower waters."⁶⁸ Augustine's views on miracles were perhaps the only ones in which he did not become more cautious as he advanced in age.⁶⁹

Though not a part of Augustine's original purpose, the *Retractationes* gives some interesting insights into Augustine's literary career. He takes the opportunity of correcting some of his earlier references to names, dates, and events, both in his life and in the years preceding his birth. For example, in three places in the *Retractationes*⁷⁰ Augustine corrects an error earlier mentioned in his anti-Donatist writings⁷¹ referring

65 *Retractationes*, I, vi, 8.

66 *Ibid.*, I, vii, 2. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XII, xv, 24; Plato, *Phaedo*, *Meno*, *Phaedrus*, *passim*.

67 *Retractationes*, I, vi, 9.

68 *Ibid.*, II, xxxii, 3, which revises the passage in *Confessiones*, XIII, xxxii, 47.

69 *Retractationes*, I, xii, 9; xiii, 7 (vide Harnack, *Die Retractionen Augustins*, 1121, n. 1).

70 II, liii, 2; liv, 2; lx, 2.

71 *Probationum et Testimoniorum Contra Donatistas, Contra Donatistam Nescio Quem*, and *De Unico Baptismo*, xvi, 28. Of these three treatises, only the last is now extant.

to the ordination of Caecilian by Felix of Aptunga; this strengthens his argument against the Donatists.⁷²

In a few places in the *Retractationes* Augustine states that an entire treatise is unacceptable. The following illustrates this:

After I had written the books of *The Soliloquies*, having now returned from the estate to Milan, I wrote one book concerning the immortality of the soul. I intended this book to serve as a reminder of the need of bringing *The Soliloquies* to a conclusion, for they still remained incomplete, but I do not know how it got into the hands of men against my will and was named among my writings.⁷³ To begin with, in the intricacy and brevity of its argument, it is so unintelligible that it wears out the person who reads it, and even wears out my powers of application.⁷⁴

Augustine's usual attitude toward his works is that the later they are the better they are. This is illustrated by his reference to his incomplete commentary on Genesis; before he finished the first book he had to stop it. Later, he decided to destroy it because of his work which was far superior to it, his *De Genesi ad Litteram*. For some reason, it was not destroyed; so, when writing the *Retractationes* he let it stand as an indication of his "first attempts to explain in detail and examine thoroughly the divine utterances."⁷⁵

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the *Retractationes* for the student of the life and work of Saint Augustine is his description of the motives and circumstances for writing each of his treatises; in most cases, he also adds a brief summary of the contents. Several were written because of the "commands of the brethren."⁷⁶ Several were composed in the heat of his battles against heresy.⁷⁷ Frequently he had to interrupt work

72 Felix and two other bishops ordained Caecilian as bishop of Carthage when Mensurius died (311). The Donatists suspected all of them of being "traditores" and ordained Majorinus; this was the start of the Donatist schism. They claimed Felix had surrendered copies of the Scriptures in the Diocletian persecution (303). Augustine now says Felix was absolved of his suspected "surrender" before he ordained Caecilian.

73 This was one of four of Augustine's Treatises which were published without his knowledge.

74 *Retractationes*, I, v, 1. Augustine speaks of his treatise *De Genesi ad Litteram Liber Unus Imperfectus* as very troublesome and very difficult (*Retractationes*, I, xvii, 1); his *De Menâcio* he regards as "obscurus, anfractuoso et omnino molestus" (*Retractationes*, I, xxvi, 1).

75 *Retractationes*, I xvii, 1.

76 "Iubentibus fratribus." Notably *Contra Hilarum*, *De Unico Baptismo*, and *Enchiridion*.

77 Ten of the ninety-three treatises reviewed in the *Retractationes* are not now extant. Of these ten, eight were anti-Donatist writings. All we have of these ten lost treatises are the brief quotations given in the *Retractationes*.

on a treatise and take up something else which appealed to him more at that moment; he would usually finish the new job and then go back to the previous work and finish that.

More than once in the *Retractationes* Augustine complains of the loss of his books or parts of them. While at Milan, awaiting baptism, he had written books on the liberal arts; he finished the one on Grammar, and began those on Music, Dialectics, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, and Philosophy; later, in Africa, he finished the one on Music, but for some unknown reason, only the beginnings of the treatises on Dialectics, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, and Philosophy were preserved. The whole of the treatise on Grammar was lost.⁷⁸ Augustine lost a treatise he had written as a refutation of the Manichaeon, Adimantus; it was found later, but not until after he had answered the questions raised by Adimantus in a second treatise and had preached against him several times.⁷⁹ When Augustine came to review his treatise *De Beata Vita*, he discovered that he possessed only a mutilated copy of it.⁸⁰

One cannot understand Augustine without giving proper attention to the *Retractationes*. Like his *Confessiones*, it arises out of the author's humility and his deep sincerity. The *Confessiones* is the personal history of the soul of a transformed sinner; the *Retractationes* is a critical summary of the growth of his thought as revealed in his writings. With rare courage, Augustine makes confession in his *Retractationes* of his intellectual pilgrimage from his earlier to his later writings.

78 *Retractationes*, I, v. 6. Augustine still thinks that some people must have these in their possession.

79 *Ibid.*, I, xxi, 1.

80 *Ibid.*, I, ii, 4.

BOOK REVIEWS

A POPULAR HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By PHILIP HUGHES. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949. 294 pages. \$3.50.

This one-volume comprehensive history of the Roman Catholic Church by one of its noted historians was first published in 1947 in England and now makes its initial appearance in America. It has the virtues and the defects of any attempt to cover two thousand years of history in several hundred pages. The author has compiled an impressive array of facts, but the limitations of space prevent any satisfactory development of the central story. The papacy is, naturally enough, the focal point for all else; and at the end of the book there are helpful chronological tables of all of the popes, starting with St. Peter, (whose dates are given as 29-67 A. D.), along with their contemporary civil rulers in Europe.

The author presents the most glaring weaknesses and the occasional immoralities of the popes with frankness. However, although such developments as the Avignonese Captivity and the Inquisition are mentioned, they are dismissed with only a few words. Some of the principal Protestant criticisms of Roman Catholic history are omitted entirely. The Reformation is dismissed as a revolution and in no sense a reform. Of the early days of Queen Elizabeth of England Father Hughes writes: "The (Marian) bishops were all deposed and a new, self-consecrated hierarchy of heretics took their place." Such bias makes impossible the writing of accurate history, but the book is a valuable statement of the Roman Catholic position.

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THE PHOTIAN SCHISM, HISTORY AND LEGEND

By FRANCIS DVORNIK. Cambridge: at the University Press; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948. xiv, 504 pages. \$7.50.

One particularly regrets that a work of this unusually great scholarly significance and importance cannot be given as full and exhaustive treatment as it richly deserves. For it is one of the few recent studies in the field of church history which is not only a model of scholarly research, but which yields unusually rich results: for it affords convincing proofs of the mythical nature of the traditional views generally held hitherto regarding the relations between the Byzantine and Western churches in the era of Patriarch Photius, and also provides a new, firmly established solution of the problem.

The first part of the book deals with the reconstruction of the true history of the famous episode. The material is based largely upon a

reinterpretation of the anti-Photian collection of documents upon which the traditional Western condemnation of the Eastern Patriarch has hitherto been based. Dr. Dvornik found most of the documents thoroughly biased by partisan interests; those bearing on the so-called second schism valueless; and those dealing with the supposed second rupture between Photius and Rome wholly mythical. There never was any second rupture. Under these circumstances, the real history of the Photian Schism turns out to be very different from what has been held about it so far. The consummate skill with which the author detected the myths and falsifications of the biased sources holds the reader's interest like a detective story. Dr. Dvornik's main conclusions are that the mischief-makers are to be found in the determined group of extremists who utilized the Ignatian incident for their own purposes and who stopped at practically nothing in order to gain their ends. It was they who persistently misrepresented the events to the papacy which to a considerable extent made the extremists' cause their own. Photius himself, however, was not without responsibility in the matter because of his hasty attack upon the Western Church which he made in 867.

In the second part of the book, Dr. Dvornik traces the development of the traditional view, so grossly unfair to Patriarch Photius, through the various stages which extended over more than ten centuries. He points out how certain influential writers, such as Gratian, Baronius, and Hergenröther, had a decisive influence upon the fixing of the mythical elements in the Western tradition, because they gave credence to the tendentious documents emanating from the extreme opponents of Photius.

As the result of the reinterpretation of the Photian episode, the figure of the great Byzantine Patriarch emerges once more as "a great Churchman, a learned humanist and a genuine Christian" (p. 432). One cannot but greet with admiration this work of patient, competent scholarly research which completely supersedes all previous work dealing with the subject.

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Matthew Spinka.

THE RENAISSANCE PHILOSOPHY OF MAN

Edited by ERNST CASSIRER and others. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948. 405 pages. \$5.00.

This volume appears as one (the second, it seems) of the Chicago Editions. Something of Hegel has already come out; promised for 1949 are writings of Kant, Leibniz, and Cicero. It gratifies Renaissance students that one of the earlier publications of this series is the present one devoted to writings, in English translation, of Petrarch, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, and Vives.

Of Petrarch Hans Nachod translated "A Self-Portrait," "The Ascent of Mont Ventoux," "On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others," "A Disapproval of an Unreasonable Use of the Discipline of Dialectic," "An Averroist Visits Petrarca," "Petrarca's Aversion to Arab

Science," "A Request to Take Up the Fight against Averroes." Of Valla C. E. Trinkhaus translated "Dialogue on Free Will." Of Ficino Josephine L. Burroughs Englished "Five Questions concerning the Mind." Then follows Elizabeth L. Forbes' version of Pico's "Oration on the Dignity of Man," of which portions had already been published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, in 1942. William Henry Hay II translated Pomponazzi's "On the Immortality of the Soul." Last is Vives' "A Fable about Man," by Nancy Lenkeith.

Confidence in the workmanship both of translations and of introductory essays is excited by the strong hand of the editors, seen in almost the whole work. The triumvirate of Cassirer, Kristeller, and Randall has meanwhile become a duumvirate by the much regretted death of Dr. Cassirer. In their general introduction the editors say that while in the Renaissance era no philosopher of first magnitude appeared, it produced much of considerable significance for philosophy in the next centuries. It is discussed under the head of humanism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism. This material bears careful reading. It is above all good that in the present stage of Renaissance studies in which so much of what we had learned about philosophy in the Renaissance is under fire, we are guided back to the sources.

The pieces were chosen to illustrate Renaissance humanism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism. Humanism's educational revolt against medieval philosophy and science did not involve a complete break with medieval thought, and much less with Christian faith. Humanism put a value on man's individuality and freedom, which keeps it in the Christian medieval tradition. Petrarch sharply criticizes certain Venetians for their learned ignorance about the greatness of human worth and of piety. Valla defends both freedom and divine foreknowledge. The very name of Pico calls to mind the idea of the dignity of man, and Ficino sees in nothing less than infinite truth and goodness the origin and end of the soul. Pomponazzi for all his Latin Averroism is in his own way devoted to personal values as much as Ficino was in his. Vives' *Fable about Man* is added to illustrate the influence of this humanist view of man's dignity upon one of the most eminent humanists of a later generation.

Three motifs give something of unity to the diverse selections. First, they are meant to show the effect of the period's preoccupation with the classical literature upon the style and method of philosophical writing, as well as the enrichment of source material. Second, they show how great was the interest in the idea of immortality. Whether it could be rationally defended or held only as an article of faith, the humanists generally maintained it. Third, throughout runs the theme of the dignity of man.

On the showing of the selections the impression is strong that the tradition of the Academy is the most potent. It shows in the extremes of Academic skepticism (apparent already in Petrarch) and of the contemplative idealism of Ficino and Pico. It is of great interest to see how earnestly the Renaissance philosophy of man tries to remain

Christian, despite the fact that on the one hand Christian faith holds things as such to be knowable, and that on the other the Christian faith insists on supernatural grace as indispensable to man's perfection. For church historians it is of importance to assess the influence of the Renaissance philosophy of man on the Reformers, Catholic as well as Protestant. The present volume should help toward this to the extent that it has pointed out how to arrive at some satisfactory statement of what thinkers held man to be. It should excite historians of the Reformation to approach the Reformers with more sharply defined questions.

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Quirinus Breen.

EVANGELISCHE EVANGELIENAUSLEGUNG

By GERHARD EBELING. *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Protestantismus*. X, i. 1942. 539 pages.

The sub-title of this work is *Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik*. It is a very thorough examination of the development of Luther's whole exegetical method. So exhaustive and competent a work is deserving of a longer notice than is possible here. I was particularly struck by Ebeling's collection in an appendix of all the sources for Luther's narration and exegesis of the story of the Wise Men. Here one sees what he derived from Jerome, Gregory I, the *Glossa Ordinaria*, Nicolas of Lyra, Bernhard, Tauler, and Ludwig of Saxony. One sees how Luther fused all of these materials and infused them with the profundities of his theology and vivified them by the vitality of his amazing imagination.

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Roland H. Bainton.

WITTENBERG UND BYZANZ

By ERNST BENZ. Marburg am Lahn: 1949. iv, 228 pages plus 8 pages of illustrations.

This is a work of extreme importance. On the basis of new documents, Benz opens up a whole chapter hitherto unknown of the relations of early Lutheranism with the Greek and Eastern churches. The most amazing discovery is that in 1559 Melancthon was responsible for a Greek translation of the Augsburg Confession presented to the Patriarch at Constantinople and corresponding to none of the previous versions. The Greek was ostensibly based on the Latin version by which it was accompanied. This Latin does not agree with the previous versions whether *veraenderte* or *unveraenderte*, but starts from the *variata* of 1531 and goes its own way. The Greek does not translate this Latin *in toto* but shows influences of the first version in German not to mention reminiscences of the Greek liturgy. What is most astounding is that the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, which had been taking on increasingly juristic aspects, was here transfigured into the ancient Greek doctrine of the attainment of incorruptibility and immortality through the new birth and union with Christ. No wonder Melancthon did not

put this out under his own name, but there is the testimony of a contemporary that it was his work, and who else, asks Benz, but the creator of the *Augustana* would have dared to take such liberties with it at a time when it had come to be almost as verbally inspired as the Scriptures? But did any one ever dream that Melancthon would go so far in the interests of ecumenicity?

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DIE REFORMATION IN DEN ITALIENISCHEN TALSCHAFTEN GRAUBÜNDENS NACH DEM BRIEF-WECHSEL BULLINGERS

By PETER DALBERT. Zurich: Dissertations-druckerei Leeman AG., 1949. 149 pages.

The introduction of the Reformation was never a gentle affair and least of all in the Grisons where the leadership was taken by Italian refugees themselves very unquiet spirits. They did not fit in anywhere, not having grown up with the tradition either of Lutheranism or of the Reformed. In their own background lay the sectarian movements of the late Middle Ages, prevailingly consumed with a zeal for moral reform and a rabid antipathy to the papacy, and secondly the humanism of the Italian Renaissance with its skeptical bent. The men who went into exile were persons of intense conviction and independence, otherwise they would have been under no necessity of leaving. In their places of asylum they found it possible to agree neither with their hosts, nor with each other. Some of the Italians accepted the orthodoxy of the locality, others cared so little for the Protestant controversies that like Vergerio they could be Reformed in the Grisons and Lutheran at Tuebingen. Many succumbed to or incited Antitrinitarianism, Antipaedobaptism, and Antisacramentalism.

Of the men treated in this book those receiving the major attention are Camillo Renato and Vergerio, with briefer treatments of Scipio Lentulo and several others. On the orthodox side among the Italians were Mainardi and Zanchi.

The man who did most to direct and moderate the developments in the Grisons was Zwingli's successor at Zürich, Heinrich Bullinger. He must have regretted the lack of native evangelical ministers in the Grisons, but instead of wringing his hands he did his best to utilize the Italians when possible, to restrain them when necessary and to reconcile and persuade them in so far as he could. His position was extremely delicate because, in the controversy over the Lord's Supper with Camillo, Bullinger was actually defending Calvin's teaching against the position once espoused by Zwingli himself.

The book is thorough and instructive. Bullinger's correspondence provides the bulk of the evidence supplemented by the extant tracts of the Italian reformers. The marks of the war and its aftermath are evident in the failure to utilize international scholarship. Dalbert did not have access to E. Morse Wilbur's *A History of Unitarianism*, which

covers a good deal of the same ground in briefer fashion and was published three years earlier.

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*CONTRIBUTI ALLA STORIA DEL CONCILIO DI TRENTO
E DELLA CONTRORIFORMA*

Quaderni di "Belfagor," IV. Florence: Vallecchi, 1948. viii, 149 pages.

The editors commence with a lament that this work on the Council of Trent could not have been inter-confessional and objectively historical in the highest sense through the collaboration of Catholic ecclesiastics. The invitations extended to Catholic churchmen were evaded with not too plausible excuses. The work had to be entrusted to the Catholic lay scholars and to secular historians in addition to the Protestants. This is distressing news to an American reader, for even in our country where tension is mounting, the Council of Trent could be handled on an inter-confessional basis at the joint meeting of the American Historical Association and the Catholic Historical Society in December 1947. The Catholic hierarchs in Italy missed an opportunity to be associated with a work of genuine scholarship.

The first essay by Garin recounts the contemporary recitals of corruption in the Church and the plans for reform prior to Trent. Cantimori tells how the "Nicodemites," that is sympathizers with Protestantism who remained in Italy in outward conformity with Rome, justified their course through the hope that the coming Council would redress the ills of the Church and reconcile the confessions. Miegge describes the vain struggle of the conciliarist and episcopal forces at Trent to curb the papalist tendencies. The imperialists still stood for a residue of conciliarism, the French held out for Gallicanism and the Spaniards for the view that the duty of episcopal residence is *de iure divino* and not subject to papal dispensation. But the Jesuits were for papalism and they won. Jemolo deals with the legislation at Trent to clear up uncertainties as to marriage. Getto demonstrates that the Catholic devotional literature in Italy in this period was in no sense arid but continued to illustrate the lyricism of the mystic tradition. Firpo points out that the Council of Trent by arousing hopes to reform stimulated Utopian thought, but the effect of the council was to purge utopias of democratic and equalitarian tendencies as well as to discourage the device of placing the ideal society on a remote island beyond papal control. Spini describes the way in which Patrizi, Acontius, and others challenged the view of history as a department of rhetoric. In the closing section Salvatorelli vindicates the claim of Sarpi to be numbered among the magisterial historians.

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*TUDOR PARISH DOCUMENTS OF THE DIOCESE
OF YORK*

By J. S. PURVIS. Cambridge: at the University Press; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949. xviii, 244 pages. \$4.50.

Dr. Purvis, the archivist of the diocese, has rediscovered the earlier

Act Books of the Ecclesiastical Commission of York. From these and from the Visitation Books, the proceedings of the Archbishops' Courts and Papers of the Consistory Court, he has given us a selection of documents illustrating the life of the Church of England in the reign of Elizabeth.

These are carefully chosen, and well arranged, and provided with an outlined table of contents and a good index. A foreword by His Grace the Archbishop of York comments on the importance of these papers, and warns that they refer to a minority and should not give us an unduly pessimistic picture of general conditions. The author's introduction gives explanation of the different types of records included and shows how impossible it is to draw conclusions on any statistical basis.

Visitations were conducted to wipe out the symbols and ceremonies connected with pre-Reformation worship, and on the other hand to uphold the forms set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. The destruction of images and Mass vestments was thorough and much of beauty was thereby lost. In cases cited, however, parishioners kept chalice and pyx of silver (p. 65) or willed vestments to their family (p. 142). By the end of the period, the change to Protestant ways was complete.

Poor parishes found it difficult to provide the Communion table, the Bible "of the largest volume," the new Elizabethan Prayer Book, the Books of Homilies, a surplice, a chalice for the communion of laity as well as priest.

Recusancy survived, and was evidenced by non-attendance at church, and also by deliberate irreverence in the Reformed services (p. 68). Puritans, on the other hand, preached against surplices as "vile clowtes and ragges" (p. 212).

Most important of all was the examination of clergy and schoolmasters, to find those capable of instructing the laity and those suitable to be licensed to preach. The ability to read the Bible in Latin and English was considered essential. A number of candidates knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In one examination, it was stated that not more than three in pre-Reformation England had been able to read Hebrew, but that "emonges the protestantes there were an hundrethe at the least, that could exactlie and absolutelie . . . rede, translate, and interpret, the Holie Scriptures owte of the Hebrew" (p. 218).

These documents are most helpful in any study of the Elizabethan church, and we look forward to Dr. Purvis' editing of others.

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THE CONCERN FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PURITAN REVOLUTION

By WILHELM SCHENK. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948.
180 pages. \$3.25.

The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution is the most illuminating and most important discussion of the political and econom-

ic ideas spawned by the Puritan Revolution that has yet appeared. It is increasingly recognized by historians that what is known as modern Anglo-Saxon culture was shaped by the events and the thinking of the formative years from 1640 to 1660, when the Laudian policy of repression was brought to an end and the absolute power of the King was overthrown, never to be restored.

In recent years, two groups of scholars have been primarily interested in the Puritan Revolution—the modern “secular” democrats who have traced their paternity to the Levellers, and the Marxists who have sought to identify the economic radicals of the seventeenth century with themselves. Both groups have discounted the importance of the religious element in the thinking of their would-be progenitors and have depicted them as being exponents of an essentially secular philosophy. Schenk destroys this “myth” in devastating and telling fashion. He indicates, for example, how John Lilburne’s democratic ideas were derived from his Calvinism (pp. 28, 31-32), and he demolishes completely the fiction that Richard Overton was an early “materialist” (pp. 168-71). In like manner, he demonstrates that the ideas of the economic radicals were firmly rooted in the Christian tradition.

An equally important contribution is the manner in which Schenk highlights the interrelationships of the various radical movements of the time. Undergirded by sectarian and/or spiritual religious ideas, the movement was from political radicalism to economic radicalism and, in the face of disappointment, to any one of several millenarian expectations. Some question might be raised concerning the positing of a line of descent, in the religion of the spirit, from Cambridge Platonism through John Saltmarsh and others to Quakerism (See Jerald C. Brauer, “Francis Rous, Puritan Mystic: An Introduction to the Study of the Mystical Element in Puritanism,” University of Chicago thesis, 1948), but these were at least parallel and related manifestations of the religious spirit in a time of social turmoil and sectarian strife.

Exception can be taken only to the concluding chapter of the book in which the author discusses the ultimate significance of the Puritan Revolution. He concludes that, while the social radicals of the Revolution were not “secular,” their “sectarianism” and “spiritualism” did tend toward a “segregation” of business and politics from religion and weakened “the hold of transcendental ideas over men’s minds” (pp. 159-61). It is certainly true that one can “argue that the free religious inquiry of men like Walwyn, which inevitably resulted in a weakening of dogma, and their extreme anticlericalism may have ultimately hindered the resistance of Christianity against that complete secularisation of which we are the bewildered heirs” (p. 58), but to accept that conclusion does not seem to the reviewer to be warranted by the facts.

If one defines “secularism” as the destruction of corporate control by an ecclesiastical institution, then it is true that this was the effect of the sectarianism and spiritualism of the Puritan Revolution. But if one defines “secularism” as the repudiation of transcendent ideas and ideals which derive their authority from God and are applicable to the total

life of society, then (in the light of subsequent history) it is difficult to see in the sectarianism and spiritualism of the Interregnum any real tendency toward secularism. Far from weakening the hold of Christian morality in society, the effect of radical Puritan thought and activity was actually to retard the advance of secularism. How else can one explain the lag in this respect which has characterized the centers of Anglo-Saxon culture? It is precisely in those areas where the authority of an established ecclesiastical institution has not been undermined by sectarian and spiritual religion that secularism has made its greatest advance. James Hastings Nichols has summarized the point very ably in these words:

The result of this Puritan pattern in English Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States, and Britain herself has also been to maintain a greater hold for Christian ethics on the common life than is the case in any other major religious tradition, Lutheran, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic. Puritan denominationalism and separation of church and state have resisted moral corrosion conspicuously better than the state-church systems. Contrary to the usual supposition, the dechristianization of modern civilization seems to have prospered in inverse ratio to 'schism'. (*The Christian Century*, March 3, 1948, p. 266).

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PROTESTANTISM FACES ITS EDUCATIONAL TASK TOGETHER

By WILLIAM CLAYTON BOWER and PERCY ROY HAYWARD. Appleton, Wisconsin: C. C. Nelson Publishing Co., 1949. \$3.25.

This book is a history of the International Council of Religious Education. The authors deal briefly with the movement out of which the Council grew—the church's cooperative efforts in the field of education, beginning as early as 1791. The International Council was organized in 1922, from the merger of the International Sunday School Association and the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations. The bulk of the book is devoted to a description of the varied activities of the Council since its foundation; chapters are devoted to such subjects as Curriculum, Children, Youth, Family Life, Leadership Education, Weekday Schools, etc. The size of the Council's activities will surprise many people who are unfamiliar with its program. In 1940-41, for example, 189,912 credits were awarded to students in leadership training classes in the United States and Canada. In 1943 there were over three million pupils in over seventy thousand vacation church schools—much of the credit for this record belonging to the Council's Department of Vacation Religious Education. The Council has actively promoted Religious Education Week, which the authors declare to be "next to Holy Week and Christmas, the most widely observed date in Protestantism"—opening with Rally Day and closing with World Wide Communion. The work of producing the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible is described.

The authors do not attempt a realistic analysis of the role of the International Council in contemporary church life. Nor do they familiarize us with the tensions and strains which no doubt have existed within the framework of the organization. Nor do they tell us how Council policy

is really formulated, nor by whom. Much of the writing makes the same impression that is made by most of the writing of traditional American history. The International Council is an important organization, one which every student of contemporary American religious life should be familiar with. The present study is an authoritative book; the chapters are filled with useful information. But I should like to see another study of the International Council, a study with a less definite connection with the Council's Department of Public Relations—a Department which succeeded in 1946 in placing in American newspapers and magazines a total of no less than 596,243 lines of copy.
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WOODROW WILSON AND AMERICAN LIBERALISM

By E. M. HUGH-JONES. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948.
295 pages. \$2.00.

This is a member of the *Teach Yourself History Library*, a series of small popular books issued under the editorial direction of A. L. Rowse, of All Souls' College, Oxford. Each book is centered about a person and extends from him to a period or movement. This on Wilson begins with a sketch of American history from the Civil War to his presidency, discussing mostly events significant in relation to his work. There follow accounts of his Princeton administration and his governorship, showing his development toward his later policies. Then come narratives of his domestic administration, of the war and of the peace, involving his personal tragedy. The statement of the history has been "got up" from good authorities, and is generally trustworthy. But being done on the basis of books, apparently without personal contact with American life, it is external and rather dull, besides decidedly British.

The last chapter bears the title of the book. American liberalism, Mr. Hugh-Jones thinks, while inspired from Britain and France, "was moulded . . . by the presence of the frontier atmosphere and the absence of an aristocracy Hence it embodies the emotional attachment to individualism and equality which is so strong as to be a fundamental American belief." Liberalism in this country, it is said, has been political, seeking equality, and economic, seeking freedom from overmastering power. In this tradition Wilson aimed to set government and business free, and he came to advocate governmental control in order to assure individual freedom. His foreign policy and his engagement in the war Mr. Hugh-Jones sees as an endeavor "to guarantee in the international sphere the same degree of morality and economic freedom as he sought to establish at home." Wilson's contributions to liberalism are held to be larger than is sometimes thought, in enduring effect on the government, in influence on the Democratic party and in international purpose.

The book is connected with church history only by more than one mention of the fact that Wilson was a Presbyterian elder. The part certainly played by religious influences in the history which it recites does not appear.
New York.

Robert Hastings Nichols.



